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Attorney General Joseph R. Biden, III reaches agreement with ChoicePoint Identification and credential verification services company to adopt enhanced measures to protect personally identifiable information

Wilmington, DE – Attorney General Joseph R. Biden, III, along with attorneys general from 43 other states, have announced a settlement with ChoicePoint to resolve allegations that the company failed to adequately maintain the privacy and security of consumers' personally identifiable information.

ChoicePoint, a provider of identification and credential verification services, collects, maintains, and distributes consumers' personally identifiable information. In February 2005, ChoicePoint announced that criminals posing as legitimate businesses gained access to consumers' personally identifiable information that it maintained. Afterward, ChoicePoint notified more than 145,000 consumers whose information may have been viewed or acquired by the criminals.

ChoicePoint settled its case with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in January, 2006 and paid \$5 million into a pool to be used for consumer redress. The agreement entered between the states and ChoicePoint goes beyond the FTC settlement. ChoicePoint will make significant, ongoing changes to the way it credentials new customers who have access to personally identifiable information. This represents the first time a data broker has agreed to protect publicly available information using the same credentialing methods used to safeguard financial information protected by law. Certain sensitive publicly available information, including Social Security numbers, will now receive greater protection.

"Identify theft is a growing threat," stated Attorney General Biden. "This agreement establishes concrete steps to be taken to better protect sensitive information of thousands of Delawareans. The Department of Justice will continue to be vigilant in safeguarding consumers' information in Delaware."

As part of this agreement, ChoicePoint will also pay \$500,000 to the states.

Consumers who suffered out of pocket expenses relating to identity theft that resulted from the ChoicePoint breach may obtain redress through the FTC by completing a redress form for consideration. The deadline to submit a claim is June 22, 2007. More information is available on the FTC website at: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/cases/choicepoint>.

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